

REMARKS

The Office Action dated December 13, 2007, and made final, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-16 and 18-47 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-16 and 18-47 stand rejected. Claim 42 stands objected to.

The objection to Claim 42 due to an informality is respectfully traversed. Claim 42 has been labeled as “(previously presented)” to reflect the previous amendment.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants request that the objection to Claim 42 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is respectfully traversed. Claim 1 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner. Specifically, Claim 1 has been amended to recite “a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game....”

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 112, second paragraph, rejection of Claim 1 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1-13, 15, 16, and 29-47 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,257,981 to Acres, et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Acres”) in view of U.S. Patent 6,769,986 to Vancura (hereinafter referred to as “Vancura”) is respectfully traversed.

Initially, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner’s assertion that the combination of Acres and Vancura describes the Applicants’ invention as claimed. Rather, Applicants submit that a method or system arrived at by combining features of Acres and Vancura would be inoperable as described by the Examiner and, as such, cannot describe the Applicants’ claimed invention. Specifically, the Examiner asserts on pages 4 and 5 of the Office Action that Vancura describes an “ability [to] change the bonus game visual activity

and triggering event as desired in col. 3, lines 18-59 on a gaming machine.” The Examiner further asserts that “[i]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the bonus game configuration abilities of Acres with the visual activity configuration abilities of Vancura....” However, Vancura does not describe nor suggest selecting at the configuration workstation at least one of a plurality of possible visual activities displayed in a list for presentation on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine to which the triggering criterion is relation. Rather, Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior to starting play of a base game.

Acres describes a system (10) for monitoring and configuring gaming devices (12-16; 22-26) connected by a network. The system (10) includes a file server (32), a plurality of floor controllers (18; 28), and a plurality of pit terminals (34). The file server (32) stores gaming activity taking place on each gaming device (12-16; 22-26). Each pit terminal (34) monitors gaming device activity in an associated pit and is also used as a security monitoring device to detect unanticipated events such as fills or payouts. Each of the interconnected gaming devices (12-16; 22-26) includes an electronic module (40) that enables the gaming device (12-16; 22-26) to communicate with a floor controller (18; 28). The electronic module (40) includes a player tracking module (44) that includes a card reader (100) for detecting a player tracking card inserted by a player for identifying the player. The electronic module (40) also includes a data communication node (42) that communicates with the floor controller (18; 28). Each floor controller (18; 28) is responsible for monitoring an activity level of gaming devices (12-16; 22-26) connected to the floor controller (18; 28). The floor controllers (18; 28) also issue commands to associated gaming devices (12-16; 22-26) to reconfigure their payout schedules during certain bonusing events. Notably, Acres does not describe nor suggest selecting at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least on multiple selected outcomes of the base game. Rather, Acres merely describes a minimum activity level that must be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times.

Vancura describes a method of enabling a player to customize a casino game. Before playing a base game, the player is offered the choice of a plurality of aspects of bonus play from which to pre-select. The player may choose trigger symbols that are used to signify entry to bonus play. Moreover, the player may choose a type of bonus game to play, should the player qualify. Further, the player may choose a monetary value and/or a difficulty of the bonus game.

Claim 1 recites a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, at least some of the gaming machines being of a type having a base game display area and a bonus game display area, wherein the method comprises “selecting at a configuration workstation coupled to the gaming machines over the network at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria displayed in a list to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game . . . selecting at the configuration workstation at least one of a plurality of possible visual activities displayed in a list for presentation on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine to which the triggering criterion is related . . . operating one of the gaming machines in accordance with the stored selections including: detecting the selected triggering criterion . . . triggering the operation of a bonus game on a gaming machine to which the detected triggering criterion is related . . . displaying the selected visual activity on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine responsive to detecting the selected triggering criterion.”

No combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, as is recited in Claim 1. More specifically, no combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests selecting, at a configuration workstation, at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game. Rather, Acres describes a system for monitoring and configuring

gaming devices that requires a minimum activity level to be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times, and Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior to starting play of a base game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claims 2-13, 15, 16, 29-33, and 45 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2-13, 15, 16, 29-33, and 45 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2-13, 15, 16, 29-33, and 45 likewise are patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claim 34 recites a method for remotely configuring a gaming machine over a network from a configuration computer, wherein the method comprises “operating a bonus configuration program on a configuration computer remote from the gaming machine, the configuration program including a rule generator comprising a plurality of selectable bonus promotion criteria . . . allowing one or more of the bonus promotion criteria to be selected and causing the one or more selected criteria to be transmitted over the network to the gaming machine . . . receiving the one or more selected criteria at the gaming machine and configuring the gaming machine according to the selected criteria, wherein the selected bonus game triggering criteria are based at least partially on at least one selected outcome of a base game played on the gaming machine and selected using the configuration computer.”

No combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests a method for remotely configuring a gaming machine over a network from a configuration computer, as is recited in Claim 34. More specifically, no combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests operating a bonus configuration program on a configuration computer remote from the gaming machine, the configuration program including a rule generator comprising a plurality of selectable bonus promotion criteria, wherein the selected criteria are received at the gaming machine, and wherein the selected bonus game triggering criteria are based at least partially on at least one selected outcome of a base game played on the gaming machine and

selected at the configuration computer. Rather, Acres describes a system for monitoring and configuring gaming devices that requires a minimum activity level to be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times, and Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior to starting play of a base game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 34 is submitted to be patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claims 35-40 depend from independent Claim 34. When the recitations of Claims 35-40 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 35-40 likewise are patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claim 41 recites a method for configuring a gaming machine of a type coupled to a network and having a base game and a bonus game, wherein the method comprises “operating a configuration computer on a network remote from a gaming machine . . . selecting at the configuration computer one or more of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria presented by the configuration program, said one or more selected criteria each comprising a bonus game triggering criterion associated with the gaming machine, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple pre-selected outcomes of the base game selected at the configuration computer . . . selecting at the configuration computer one or more of a plurality of possible visual activities presented by the configuration program . . . selecting at the configuration computer one or more of a plurality of possible items of value . . . operating the gaming machine by: detecting the selected triggering criterion; triggering the operation of the bonus game . . . displaying the selected visual activity at the gaming machine responsive to detecting the selected triggering criterion . . . and awarding one or more of the plurality of possible items of value to a player of the gaming machine.”

No combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests a method for configuring a gaming machine having a base game and a bonus game, as is recited in Claim 41. More specifically, no combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests selecting

at a configuration computer one or more of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria presented by a configuration program, wherein the one or more selected criteria each include a bonus game triggering criterion associated with the gaming machine, and wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple pre-selected outcomes of the base game selected at the configuration computer. Rather, Acres describes a system for monitoring and configuring gaming devices that requires a minimum activity level to be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times, and Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior to starting play of a base game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 41 is submitted to be patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claim 42 depends from independent Claim 41. When the recitations of Claim 42 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 41, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 42 likewise is patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claim 43 recites a gaming machine coupled to a network and controlled by a processor and a memory in response to a wager, wherein the gaming machine comprises “a special feature indicated on a visual display, the visual display depicting a bonus event triggered responsive to a bonus rule received over a network and stored in memory, the bonus rule being generated at a configuration station coupled to the network by selecting at least one of each of: a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria, wherein the at least one selected bonus game triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of a based game played on the gaming machine . . . a plurality of possible special features for indication on the visual display . . . a plurality of possible items of value awarded to a winner of the bonus event.”

No combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests a gaming machine, as is recited in Claim 43. More specifically, no combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests a special feature indicated on a visual display depicting a bonus event triggered responsive to a bonus rule generated at a configuration station coupled to the network by

selecting at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria, wherein the at least one selected bonus game triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of a based game played on the gaming machine. Rather, Acres describes a system for monitoring and configuring gaming devices that requires a minimum activity level to be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times, and Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior to starting play of a base game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 43 is submitted to be patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claim 44 depends from independent Claim 43. When the recitations of Claim 44 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 43, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 44 likewise is patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claim 46 recites an apparatus for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, at least some of the gaming machines being of a type having a base game display area and a bonus game display area, wherein the apparatus comprises “a configuration workstation coupled to the gaming machines over the network, including: a monitor for displaying a list of possible bonus game triggering criteria and a plurality of possible visual activities . . . means for selecting at least one of the plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of the games, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game selected at the configuration workstation prior to play of the at least one game . . . means for selecting at least one of the plurality of possible visual activities for presentation on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine to which the triggering criterion is related . . . means for detecting the selected triggering criterion . . . means for triggering the operation of a bonus game on a gaming machine to which the detected triggering criterion is related . . . means for displaying the selected visual activity on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine responsive to detecting the selected triggering criterion.”

No combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests an apparatus for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, as is recited in Claim 46. More specifically, no combination of Acres and Vancura describes nor suggests a configuration workstation coupled to the gaming machines and including a means for selecting at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game selected at the configuration workstation prior to play of the at least one game. Rather, Acres describes a system for monitoring and configuring gaming devices that requires a minimum activity level to be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times, and Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior to starting play of a base game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 46 is submitted to be patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

Claim 47 depends from independent Claim 46. When the recitations of Claim 47 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 46, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 47 likewise is patentable over Acres in view of Vancura.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-13, 15, 16, and 29-47 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0176216 to Storey (hereinafter referred to as "Storey") is respectfully traversed.

Acres and Vancura are described above. Storey describes a gaming machine (100) that is operable in a basic mode to play a base game and in a bonus mode to play a bonus game. After the gaming machine (100) awards credits to a player having won a basic game, a processor (200) continues operating in basic mode, unless the outcome of the basic game

matches at least one of two bonus triggers. If the outcome matches either of the two bonus triggers, the processor (200) selects a bonus game from a set of bonus games associated with the bonus trigger having been matched to the basic game outcome.

Claim 1 recites a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, at least some of the gaming machines being of a type having a base game display area and a bonus game display area, wherein the method comprises “selecting at a configuration workstation coupled to the gaming machines over the network at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria displayed in a list to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least on partially multiple selected outcomes of the base game . . . selecting at the configuration workstation at least one of a plurality of possible visual activities displayed in a list for presentation on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine to which the triggering criterion is related . . . operating one of the gaming machines in accordance with the stored selections including: detecting the selected triggering criterion . . . triggering the operation of a bonus game on a gaming machine to which the detected triggering criterion is related . . . displaying the selected visual activity on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine responsive to detecting the selected triggering criterion.”

No combination of Acres, Vancura, and Storey describes nor suggests a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, as is recited in Claim 1. More specifically, no combination of Acres, Vancura, and Storey describes nor suggests selecting at a configuration workstation at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game. Rather, Acres describes a system for monitoring and configuring gaming devices that requires a minimum activity level to be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times, Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior

to starting play of a base game, and Storey describes a gaming machine that includes a processor that shifts the gaming machine from a base game mode to a bonus game mode if a base game outcome matches either of two bonus triggers.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of Storey.

Claim 14 depends from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claim 14 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 14 likewise is patentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of Storey.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claim 14 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 18-25 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,669,559 to Baerlocher, et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Baerlocher ‘559”) is respectfully traversed.

Acres and Vancura are described above. Baerlocher ‘559 describes a gaming device (10) that includes a program that automatically begins a bonus round game when a player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game, such as a particular arrangement of indicia on a display window (28). The bonus round game begins by providing the player with a plurality of image selections. The player then chooses a selection and the bonus round game exhibits a symbol that is either a non-terminating symbol or a terminating symbol. The bonus round game awards a basic value to the player each time the player locates certain symbols and awards a match value when matching symbols are located. If the player chooses a selection that is a terminating symbol, the bonus round game terminates. Notably, Baerlocher ‘559 does not describe nor suggest selecting at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game.

Claim 1 recites a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, at least some of the gaming machines being of a type having a base game display area and a bonus game display area, wherein the method comprises “selecting at a configuration workstation coupled to the gaming machines over the network at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria displayed in a list to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game . . . selecting at the configuration workstation at least one of a plurality of possible visual activities displayed in a list for presentation on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine to which the triggering criterion is related . . . operating one of the gaming machines in accordance with the stored selections including: detecting the selected triggering criterion . . . triggering the operation of a bonus game on a gaming machine to which the detected triggering criterion is related . . . displaying the selected visual activity on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine responsive to detecting the selected triggering criterion.”

No combination of Acres, Vancura, and Baerlocher ‘559 describes nor suggests a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, as is recited in Claim 1. More specifically, no combination of Acres, Vancura, and Baerlocher ‘559 describes nor suggests selecting at a configuration workstation at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game. Rather, Acres describes a system for monitoring and configuring gaming devices that requires a minimum activity level to be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times, Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior to starting play of a base game, and Baerlocher ‘559 describes a bonus round game in which a player chooses a selection and the bonus round game exhibits a symbol, wherein the bonus round game awards a basic value or greater to the player each

time the player locates a non-terminating symbol and terminates the bonus round game if the player locates a terminating symbol.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of Baerlocher '559.

Claims 18-25 and 28 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 18-25 and 28 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 18-25 and 28 likewise are patentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of Baerlocher '559.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 18-25 and 28 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 26 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,506,118 to Baerlocher, et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Baerlocher '118") is respectfully traversed.

Acres and Vancura are described above. Baerlocher '118 describes a gaming device (10) that includes a base game, a bonus game, and a bonus scheme that enables a player to modify an existing award offer. An initial award offer is made to the player, and the player may then accept the initial award offer or modify the initial award offer to form a subsequent award offer. The subsequent award offer is based on the initial award offer and may be of lesser, greater, or equal value than the initial award offer. Notably, Baerlocher '118 does not describe nor suggest selecting at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game.

Claim 1 recites a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, at least some of the gaming machines being of a type having a base game display area and a bonus game display area, wherein the method comprises "selecting at a configuration workstation coupled

to the gaming machines over the network at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria displayed in a list to thereby define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game . . . selecting at the configuration workstation at least one of a plurality of possible visual activities displayed in a list for presentation on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine to which the triggering criterion is related . . . operating one of the gaming machines in accordance with the stored selections including: detecting the selected triggering criterion . . . triggering the operation of a bonus game on a gaming machine to which the detected triggering criterion is related . . . displaying the selected visual activity on the bonus game display area of the gaming machine responsive to detecting the selected triggering criterion.”

No combination of Acres, Vancura, and Baerlocher ‘118 describes nor suggests a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on at least one of the networked gaming machines, as is recited in Claim 1. More specifically, no combination of Acres, Vancura, and Baerlocher ‘118 describes nor suggests selecting at a configuration workstation at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria to define a bonus game triggering criterion related to at least one of a base game and the bonus game, wherein the selected triggering criterion is based at least partially on multiple selected outcomes of the base game. Rather, Acres describes a system for monitoring and configuring gaming devices that requires a minimum activity level to be maintained by the player by playing a game a predetermined number of times, Vancura describes a gaming machine that allows a player to choose aspects of a bonus game at the gaming machine, prior to starting play of a base game, and Baerlocher ‘118 describes a gaming device that includes a base game, a bonus game, and a bonus scheme that enables a player to modify an existing award offer during the bonus game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of Baerlocher ‘118.

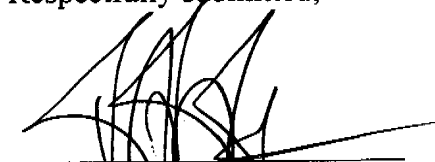
Claims 26 and 27 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 26 and 27 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit

that dependent Claims 26 and 27 likewise are patentable over Acres in view of Vancura and further in view of Baerlocher '118.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 26 and 27 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert B. Reesor, III
Registration No. 45,548
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070